



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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Baucus Disturbed by Actions of Treasury-Transportation Conferees; Removal of Cuba Provisions Undemocratic

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) U.S. Senator Max Baucus today expressed his extreme displeasure with the actions of the fiscal year 2004 Treasury-Transportation appropriations conferees to remove Cuba travel provisions from the funding bill. Baucus stated that these actions "violate the will of Congress and set the stage for a fight when the bill comes to the floor."

Last month, Baucus joined a number of fellow Senators to include language in the Treasury-Transportation bill that would prevent enforcement of the Cuba travel ban. The provision passed by a solid majority -- 227-188 in the House, 59-36 in the Senate -- and should have been protected throughout conference negotiations since the provision was included in both the House and Senate funding bills.

Last week, Baucus sent a letter to House and Senate conferees urging them to protect the Cuba provisions and stating that he would examine, "all parliamentary options available" if the Cuba language is dropped from the bill. Sens. Larry E. Craig, Mike Enzi, and Chris Dodd also signed the letter.

Baucus made the following statement today regarding the elimination of the Cuba travel provisions:

"We have won votes in both the House and Senate on the issue of Cuba travel. For a few individuals in backroom negotiations to override the will of a majority of Congress sets a dangerous, undemocratic precedent and I plan to fight it when the conference report goes to the floor."

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